

Ever since Nov. 24, 1963, when Dallas nightclub owner Jack Ruby shot and killed Lee Harvey Oswald, various critics of the Warren Commission have wondered about Ruby's possible involvement in a conspiracy to assassinate President John F. Kennedy. Seth Kantor, who recently joined the Washington bureau of the Atlanta Constitution and a longtime North American Newspaper Alliance correspondent, knew Ruby in Dallas, spoke with him at Parkland Memorial Hospital the day Kennedy was shot and was subsequently questioned by the Warren Commission. In 1974, using the Freedom of Information Act, Kantor began to look for the answers to the Jack Ruby puzzle. The result—**WHO WAS JACK RUBY?**, published this month by Everest House. It is a book which Publisher's Weekly says 'tears to shreds' the commission's portrait of Ruby. Following is the fourth article in a seven-part serialization of Kantor's book.

### By SETH KANTOR

The Warren Commission said it could "not establish a significant link between (Jack) Ruby and organized crime."

The commission acknowledged that when Ruby moved to Dallas from Chicago in 1947, he was linked with Paul Rowland Jones, the Chicago crime syndicate's payoff man to the Dallas police.

"But Ruby has disclaimed that he was associated with organized-crime activities," said the Warren Report, "and law enforcement agencies have confirmed that denial."

A far more accurate picture of Jack Ruby in the six months before he pulled the trigger is one that shows him having private, hotline phone conversations with the underworld at two crucial intervals.

The first was in June 1963, when a group of Chicago gangsters held a clandestine council in Dallas to plan the takeover of local gambling and prostitution operations.

The second covered the 11 days just before President Kennedy's assassination, when Ruby abruptly signed a power of attorney, giving up certain rights to control his own money. He also suddenly bought and installed a safe for the first time in his 16 years as a Dallas nightclub operator, to store extra amounts of money.

**ACTUALLY, DURING** those critical months before the Kennedy assassination, Ruby was heavily in debt. He had grown desperate for money. His debts to the federal government alone had risen to more than \$39,000 in owed



Part 4 of a series

## WHO WAS JACK RUBY?

excise and income taxes.

There is ample evidence that Ruby turned to the mob for financial help and had it lined up by November 19—only two days before Kennedy arrived in Texas. On November 19, Ruby suddenly told his tax attorney that "a friend," never identified, would provide him money to settle the long-standing tax debts.

The mob was Ruby's "friend." And Ruby could well have been paying off an IOU the day he was "used" to kill Lee Harvey Oswald. As Ruby expressed it to Chief Justice Warren in their June 7, 1964, session: "I have been used for a purpose." It would not have been hard for the mob to maneuver Ruby through the ranks of a few negotiable police.

Paul Rowland Jones, according to an FBI report, said that "from his acquaintance with Ruby he doubted that (Ruby) would have become emotionally upset and killed Oswald on the spur of the moment. He felt Ruby would have done it for money..."

On June 6, an official in the Dallas district Internal Revenue Service office entered a notation on Jack Ruby's records that Ruby's tax attorney, Graham R.E. Koch, had telephoned to report that Ruby would settle his three-and-a-half-year-old accumulation of \$39,129 in federal tax debts "as soon as arrangements can be made to borrow money... (and) will contact this office not later than June 14."

On June 7, Chicago tough-guy Robert "Barney" Baker was paroled from Sandstone Prison. He was a massive henchman who pushed people around for James Riddle Hoffa, head of the Teamsters Union. Ruby would

soon be looking for help from Baker.

By June 8, a Saturday, a large group of Chicago racketeers began to show up at Ruby's Carousel and at two other nearby strip-show clubs, according to a confidential report to Dallas Police Chief Jesse E. C. Robert L. May, Jr., who had been head of the vice squad.

By Sunday, June 9, May said, one of the nation's top vice lords was flown in for the meetings, landing in a private plane at a small airport south of Dallas. Ruby placed phone calls on June 10 and 13 to a restaurant between Dallas and Fort Worth, where some of the hoods were meeting. If they were going to rearrange any of the action in Dallas, he would want a piece of it.

On June 10, Ruby placed a 16-minute phone call to Edna, Texas, to Juanita Slusher Dale Phillips Sahakian (stage name: Candy Barr), who had been paroled from the Texas state prison in April on a marijuana-possession sentence she had been serving since 1959. Candy Barr was 28 and separated from her third husband.

**RUBY HAD BEEN CONTACTING** her steadily since April—five phone calls and a personal visit—but not to get her to resume her once-meteoritic stripping career. She was under strict parole provisions not to strip again, at least until 1974, and she could not even visit

Dallas under the terms of her release.

Ruby had reason to be interested in underworld connections Candy Barr had made in prison, especially her West Coast contact. California mobster Mickey Cohen, king of the West Coast rackets, had been her boyfriend in a tempestuous affair before she had gone behind the walls.

Later that day, June 10, Ruby telephoned the unlisted West Coast number of convicted extortionist Ruby Eichenbaum. They talked for 20 minutes, according to phone company records. Eichenbaum had served his

time and now was running an investments and loan business in the San Francisco area—with no employees, no listed business number in the phone book and from a house protected by a high barbed-wire fence and ferocious dogs. Ruby was looking for a way to settle his IRS debts.

But mob terms were too stiff for Ruby. If he defaulted on payments, for instance, the penalty was a lot more swift and painful than the penalties provided by the U.S. government. So Ruby set aside plans to borrow from the mob. Instead, his tax lawyer contacted the IRS with a proposal to settle Ruby's debts at about 8 cents on the dollar. The IRS said it would think about it.

By the start of the second interval, November 11, Ruby's financial picture had grown more bleak.

On November 11, Ruby telephoned Chicago and talked with Jimmy Hoffa's satistic, 370-pound professional bully, Barner Baker.

Also that same day, Ruby met with Alexander Philip Gruber in Dallas. Alex Gruber and Ruby had boarded together in their Chicago days, when Gruber was using several aliases, was arrested a number of times and convicted as a grand-larcenist.

**GRUBER WAS SELLING** scrap metal in Los Angeles and running with Frank Matula, whom Hoffa had installed as a Teamsters official shortly after Matula

got out of jail on perjury charges.

Gruber also maintained known connections with hoodlums who worked with racketeer Mickey Cohen.

The next day, November 12, Ruby telephoned Cohen's favorite Texas pastime, Candy Barr, and talked to her for 14 minutes at her home in Edna. That same day, Paul Rowland Jones showed up coincidentally from Birmingham, Ala.

On November 12 and 13, Jones met with Ruby and with Gruber. The three hadn't conferred since 1947, the year Ruby moved to Dallas. Gruber told the FBI he was in Joplin, Mo., in November 1963 and just decided to drop in on Ruby "since Dallas, Texas, was about one-hundred miles from Joplin." The distance is 360 miles.

At about this time, Ruby telephoned Chicago thug Lenny Patrick, according to information the Warren Commission received from Hyman Rubenstein, Jack Ruby's brother, and from Ruby's sister, Eva Grant.

Patrick was really bad news—a convicted bank robber, arrested numerous times on suspicion of being triggerman in several gangland killings.

**THE WARREN COMMISSION'S** chronicle of Ruby's activities for Sunday, November 17, failed to include a reported trip made by Ruby to Las Vegas, even though the FBI spoke to witnesses who confirmed Ruby's presence in Las Vegas.

Ruby's special Las Vegas connection was Lewis McWillie, the syndicate gambler Ruby had visited in Cuba in 1959. Ruby made a series of phone calls in 1963 to McWillie, who was closely associated with Meyer Lansky's hoodlum empire and was installed in Las Vegas as pit boss at the Thunderbird casino.

On May 10, 1963, Ruby had a .38 caliber Smith and Wesson Centennial revolver shipped to McWillie, according to the records of Dallas gun dealer Ray Brantley.

Ruby didn't want his personal Las Vegas mission to become known and Ralph Paul, a back-room business associate of Ruby's, told the Warren Commission Ruby could be very secretive about his comings and goings. Ruby didn't want his club employees to know when he slipped out of town, in order to keep them from stealing his profits, Paul said.

Two days after the Las Vegas trip, Ruby turned up in attorney Koch's office on November 19 and said he had a connection who would supply him money to settle his long-standing government tax problems. In turn, Ruby signed a power-of-attorney form in Koch's office, which entitled the lawyer to control much of Ruby's financial dealings with the government.

The transaction was extraordinary for Ruby, who kept most of his money out of the bank so there could be no watch on the extent and use of his

funds. Ruby said he feared the government would place liens on his bank account to obtain the tax money he owed.

Ruby's checking account for his Carousel Club that day, November 19, in the Merchants State Bank stood at \$246.65, which was within a few dollars of what the account usually had in it.

"Jack always carried a large roll of cash," remembers Bill Cox, then the loan officer at the bank. "He would just come into the bank to make change for the club," said Cox, who vividly remembers Ruby standing in line at a teller's cage on the afternoon of November 22, after President Kennedy was slain.

"Jack was standing there crying and he had about seven-thousand dollars in cash on him the day of the assassination. He and I talked, and I warned him that he'd be knocked in the head one day, carrying all the cash on him."

But Ruby wasn't worried about what would happen out there on the street, where he could protect himself with the loaded, snub-nosed revolver, serial No. 2744, which he carried that afternoon.

What he was worried about was leaving the \$7,000 in the bank, where the federal government could get it.

\*1978, by SETH KANTOR  
NANA

NEXT: The Cuba Connection